

## A CHANAPATA FIGURINE FROM CUZCO, PERU

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A rare hollow pottery figurine was found by the University of California expedition to southern Peru, during the course of excavation at the Minas Pata site (PCz 12-9) in the province of Quispicanchis, Department of Cuzco. This specimen is the only known complete figurine with a probably early date from the Cuzco region. Its size (20 by 8 by 3.5 cm.) and unusual construction, as well as stratigraphic associations suggest that its deposition was an offering rather than a casual discard.

The site of Minas Pata where the figurine was found is a multi-component habitation zone covering a large area of the west end of an ancient lava flow. The site overlooks the southeast edge of Lake Lucre in the lowest basin of the three-basin drainage system of the long valley of Cuzco, and is marked Mt. Rumicolca on Herbert Gregory's map of the area.<sup>1</sup> The whole area of the lava flow, sometimes referred to as Raqch'i, is covered by nearly continuous archaeological remains. These include the Inca ruins of Kañaraqay (PCz 12-11)<sup>2</sup> and Rumiqlolqa (PCz 12-4),<sup>3</sup> as well as Minas Pata and other pre-Inca sites. It is interesting to note that local names subdivide this continuous zone into sections which seem to have archaeological significance. Minas Pata is the name for one such section.

That this end of the Cuzco valley was very important throughout prehistoric times is attested to by the Raqch'i zone and by the many other archaeological remains that surround Lake Lucre. The most famous of these are the Middle Horizon ceremonial-storage center of Pikillaqta (PCz 12-1) and the standing ruins, possibly Inca, called Choqepukyu (PCz 12-8), which are visible from the Cuzco-Puno road on the north side of the lake.<sup>4</sup>

The Minas Pata site was first recorded by Manuel Chávez Ballón, and it was shown by him to John H. Rowe in 1954. In the course of a resumption of archaeological survey in the Lucre Basin, it was visited several times in 1968 by a group of students from the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Cuzco, under the direction of John H. Rowe. Finally, in 1969, after extensive surface collection by the author and students from the University of Cuzco, it was decided to excavate five 2 by 2 meter exploratory pits in order to determine more fully the potential of the site. The excavations were directed by Jane Powell Dwyer, Alfredo Valencia Zegarra, and me, as representatives of the Patronato Departamental de Arqueología del Cuzco.

The Minas Pata midden consists of deep, stratified refuse deposits covering an area of some 200 by 300 meters. The figurine discussed in this paper was the only complete ceramic artifact recovered from the excavations. It was found at a depth of 35 cm. in excavation Unit 2, lying face up, with its head oriented to the northwest, up the long valley of Cuzco.

The Minas Pata figurine is made of a reddish-brown paste with fine white and black temper. The surface of the figurine appears to be slipped with a finer version of the same clay from which the body walls are constructed and is also reddish-brown in color. While the surface was carefully polished, the marks of the polishing tool are still visible, and these marks average 1 mm. in width. This gives the surface a slightly uneven and streaky appearance.

The figurine is constructed so that the head is solid. A hollow chamber extends from the neck to the base. There are two small holes in the figurine's chest which allowed for the expansion of air in the chamber during the firing process. Since the hollow section was broken, we could determine that the average wall thickness was 3-4 mm. The interior of the chamber was smooth but in no way finished. The most likely method of forming this hollow chamber was to attach two clay slabs with the juncture running around the edge of the flat back. Appliqué decoration could have been added after the head-chamber unit had partially dried.

The figurine itself is unusually large. It is 20 cm. tall and 8 cm. wide across the face. The sexless nature of the presentation is also somewhat rare. Most other early Peruvian figurines have well-defined primary and/or secondary sexual characteristics.<sup>5</sup> The Minas Pata figurine has high relief appliqué arms and legs. Its fingers are indicated by shallow incisions, and incisions on each wrist may even represent bracelets. A comparably early burial from the same site contained at least one bracelet of cut sea shell, suggesting that similar bracelets may have been represented on the figurine. The way its eyes are made is unique, and I know of no other example of this type of eye depiction on Peruvian figurines of similar age. The eyes are round appliqué pellets set in shallow depressions, with small punctations indicating the pupils. The ears of the figurine are pierced, probably to support some sort of ear decoration. Hair may be indicated by rows of round punctations above the forehead. It is also important to note that the figurine was not made to be viewed in the round. Its back is smoothed but has no design elements. The figurine will not stand erect, but seems made to lie flat or to be held in the hand. It does not appear to be mold made.

There are two published Peruvian figurines which are in some ways reminiscent of the Minas Pata specimen. One is from Kotosh in the central sierra.<sup>6</sup> This figurine has a slight resemblance to the Minas Pata specimen in limb form and hand and finger treatment. Another figurine, an anthropomorphic whistle with a supposed Paracas (south coast) provenience, also has similar limb form and hand treatment.<sup>7</sup> Although all three of these figurines, the Minas Pata, Kotosh and Paracas examples, are probably nearly contemporaneous and share certain conventions such as the arms and legs being doubled with the hands on the chest; and although they are all quite different from the "standing female" figurines common to the Peruvian coast during the Early Horizon,<sup>8</sup> they are probably not closely related. They simply come from sites which are too widely separated. Unfortunately, there are so few figurines of this antiquity, let alone from the sierra, that comparisons of resemblances are not very useful in generating an understanding of cultural patterns or even

chronology.

Despite the shallow depth at which the Minas Pata figurine was found, it is possible to make limited stratigraphic arguments for its antiquity. The level that it came from underlay the zone of surface soil. The level was clearly defined, and distinct in appearance from both the level below and from the surface layer. There was no indication of a pit penetrating this second level, and therefore, stratigraphic associations should date the piece.

Although there were very few diagnostic sherds in association with the figurine, this fact is not surprising, since the exposure was only 2 by 2 meters, and analysis of the plain wares is not yet completed. Of the 325 sherds recovered from the level, 22 could be fixed temporally, based on the Cuzco style sequence worked out by Manuel Chávez Ballón and John Rowe.<sup>9</sup> Of these sherds there were 19 which fit within the range of the Marcavalle and Chanapata styles, two which may be Waru or some related style, and one which seems to show Huari or Middle Horizon influence. This range of sherd types is most likely a result of a combination of minor disturbance within the excavated level, and our inability to make fine stratigraphic distinctions in the upper part of the level due to heavy root penetration. In any case, it can be assumed that the figurine dates to the time period bracketed by the earliest and latest sherds within the excavated section.

On stylistic grounds it is somewhat easier to place the figurine. Its surface treatment and paste are very similar to that of the Classic and Derived Chanapata styles of the late Early Horizon and Early Intermediate Period in the Cuzco basin. The Minas Pata figurine almost certainly dates within some phase of the Chanapata series. From the sites of Chanapata and Marcavalle in the Cuzco basin, there are a number of carbon 14 measurements which suggest that the Chanapata style lasted about 400 years, from 600 B.C. to 200 B.C.<sup>10</sup> The figurine thus probably dates to a period at least two centuries before the beginning of the Christian Era.

The stratigraphic associations of the Minas Pata figurine also give important clues for the interpretation of its function. Although the hollow section of its lower trunk had been broken by a large overlying stone metate, the figurine was completely restorable. Careful washing of the earth matrix which had filled the hollow section of the figurine showed that it contained nine small clay balls of 3-5 mm. in diameter. While it is possible that the small balls were accidents of construction, or introduced after or by the figurine breakage, this is not the most likely explanation for their presence. The clay balls seem to have been fired, presumably at the same time as, and inside of, the figurine. This would indicate that the figurine was, in fact, an anthropomorphic rattle. Subsequent reconstruction with the clay balls inside of the figurine body did not produce a resonant rattle. However, this effect could be due to the lack of resonance of broken but repaired pottery. Then again, it may be that the specimen was originally intended to produce a dull sound.

The circumstances of the deposition of the figurine in the Minas Pata midden shed light on another function it may have served. In the same level, and 60 cm. to the north of the figurine, was a dense concentration of 310 small land snail shells.<sup>11</sup> Because of the complete state of the figurine and the concentration and intact state of the fragile snail shells, there could have been only very minimal disturbance after the deposition of these objects. Considering these conditions, it seems unlikely that the figurine was a child's toy which was lost or simply thrown away and then gradually covered with refuse. It seems equally unlikely that it represents a discarded musical instrument. The figurine was probably placed on the ground and covered with the stone metate. The whole area may have been then covered with loose earth. These conditions suggest that the figurine was a deliberately buried offering.

This suggestion is strengthened by ethnohistoric and ethnographic information which shows that a persistent Andean offering tradition includes the burial of small figurines.<sup>12</sup> A number of buried pottery offerings have been reported in the Peruvian archaeological literature, but these usually consist of vessels broken in situ.<sup>13</sup> One can only guess as to the particular significance of a specific offering. However, in the area of Cuzco buried offerings are presently made to insure crop and animal fertility. It is possible that some such purpose led to the burial of the Minas Pata figurine.

The use of a figurine as a buried offering as early as Chanapata times is important because it might explain the occurrence of several small solid figurines of fired clay found by Rowe in refuse at the site of Chanapata. Rowe also found a part of a hollow figurine in a post-Chanapata style which he called Carmenca.<sup>14</sup> These finds, along with the information from Minas Pata seem to indicate a tradition of figurine production and perhaps the long use of these figurines in religious activity. The Minas Pata specimen is, nevertheless, unique. It represents the only example of a hollow figurine-rattle from Cuzco, if not from all of Peru. Its probably ceremonial function gives yet another hint to the complexity of the early cultures of the valley of Cuzco.

#### Acknowledgements

The field work at the Minas Pata site was sponsored by the Patronato Departamental de Arqueología del Cuzco and supported by National Science Foundation Grant GS-2002 (Principal Investigator, John H. Rowe). Special thanks are expressed to Manuel Chávez Ballón, Luis A. Pardo, and to all the personnel of the Cuzco Patronato who aided us in the field. I also wish to express my gratitude to Karen Mohr-Chávez who has made available unpublished data from the site of Marcavalle in the Cuzco valley, and to John Rowe, Patricia Lyon, and Dorothy Menzel who provided useful suggestions and advice on all phases of my field work.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Gregory, 1916, includes a large scale (1:62,000) topographic map of the valley of Cuzco.

<sup>2</sup>Santa, 1965, pp. 327-352.

<sup>3</sup>Squier, 1877, pp. 419-421. Squier described the ruins of Rumiqolqa and called them the Fortress of Piquillacta.

<sup>4</sup>Harth-Terré, 1959, pp. 41-56.

<sup>5</sup>Lilien, ms.

<sup>6</sup>Izumi and Sono, 1963, pl. 100c. This figurine is probably one of the two figurines from Construction B which are included in the Kotosh San Blas Period (p. 157). This Period may date to just before the beginning of the Christian Era, making the Kotosh and Minas Pata figurines roughly contemporaneous.

<sup>7</sup>Bird, 1962, fig. 49A. While it is often very difficult to judge the style of a piece of pottery from a photograph, this whistle illustrated by Bird is similar to Paracas style pottery of the late Early Horizon and may belong to phase 10 of the style sequence worked out by Menzel, Rowe, and Dawson (1964).

<sup>8</sup>Engel, 1956; Carrión Cachot, 1948.

<sup>9</sup>Rowe, 1956, p. 142.

<sup>10</sup>Mohr-Chávez, 1969, pp. 48-49, and personal communication, 1970.

<sup>11</sup>The snail shells have been identified by Lawrence E. Dawson of the Robert H. Lowie Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley. They are land snails (Bulimulus orophilus, Morelet) which are common on cacti of the genus Cereus in the temperate valleys of the plateaus of Cuzco (Tryon, 1885-1935, vol. X, p. 183; plate 46, figs. 55-7). I can only suggest that they formed some part of the offering. The occurrence of land snail shells in graves is common on the north coast of Peru and in the highlands of Ecuador (Larco Hoyle, 1946, p. 156; Murra, 1946, p. 800).

<sup>12</sup>Cobo, lib. 13, cap. XIII-XVI (1956, pp. 169-186); Tschopik, 1951, p. 246.

<sup>13</sup>Menzel, 1964, pp. 6, 19; Ravines Sánchez, 1969, pp. 19-45; Lumbreras and Amat, 1969, pp. 165-168.

<sup>14</sup>Rowe, 1944, fig. 16, no. 5.

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## KEY TO ILLUSTRATIONS

## Plate XIX

Fig. 1. The Minas Pata figurine in situ showing overlying stone, on right, resting upon the figurine's lower section. Trowel indicates magnetic north.

Fig. 2. The figurine with the overlying stone removed. The presence of rootlets growing into the dirt filled interior indicates that the breakage was not immediately prior to or due to excavation. The complete state of the figurine, however, suggests that it was broken at some time after its deposition.

## Plate XX

Fig. 3. Drawing of the restored figurine showing front and profile views. The two holes on the chest open into the hollow interior, while those where ears should be may have held ornaments. Drawing by Enrique Castelo Olivares, inked by Catherine T. Brandel.

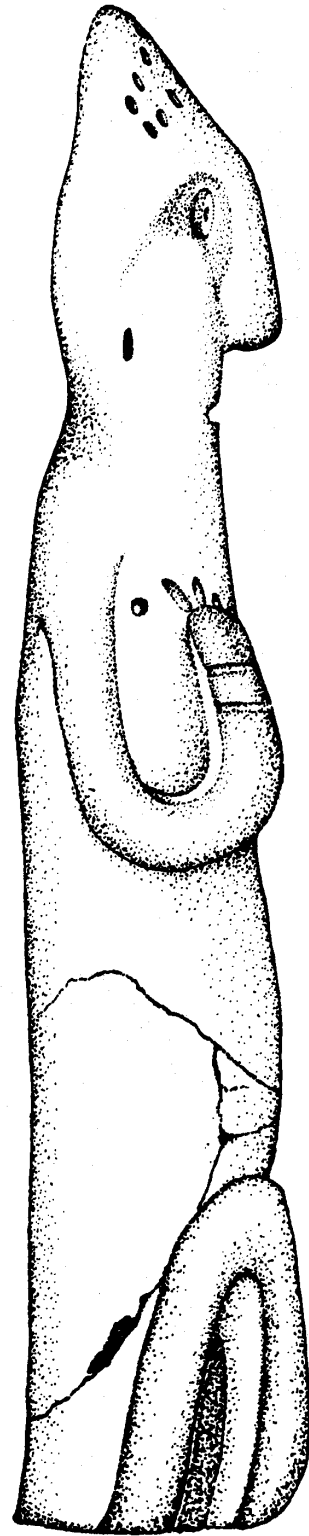
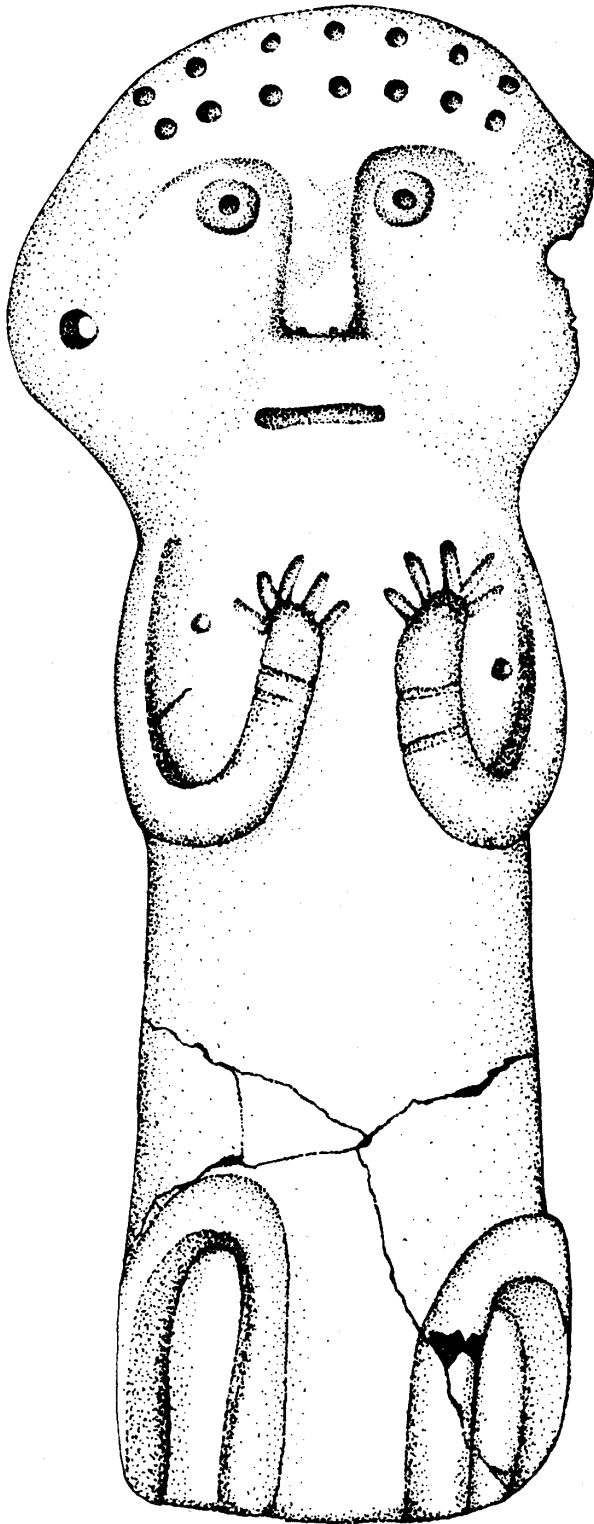




1

2

Plate XIX. Fig. 1, figurine in situ with overlying stone; fig. 2, figurine after removal of stone.



3

Plate XX. Restored figurine.